

AN ITEM OF POSTAL PERFORATING HISTORY

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Bryan Magee of The Perfin Club of New Zealand and Australia has reported a photograph of philatelic interest which was in the May auction of Charles Leski (Melbourne). The lot is described as a 23 x 19 cm 1880s albumen photograph showing a man operating a perforating press. The photograph was entitled “GPO Stamp Branch” and was listed under the “Great Britain” section of the auction catalogue. Indeed, the lettering on the top of the box in the foreground appears to be “STAMP BRANCH”. The mechanism is treadle operated and is very similar to that of the Australian “VG” perforator owned by member **John Mathews**. The perforating head structure also looks similar to two other line perforators seen several years ago.



If the device was operated by the GPO Stamp Branch, it is most likely to be a line perforator, but also it could have been one used to perforate one of the GB official perfins. Peripheral points of interest are that the pieces of paper punched out appear to drop into nothing more “technical” than a cardboard carton; and no-one bothered to remove the weeds at the edge of the path to the left of the operator’s foot before the photograph was made!